Section 4 of the existing Indian Post Office Act, 1898 confers exclusive privilege on the Central Government for conveying letters with some exceptions. The present weight limit of the letter is 2000 grams in individual cases. The Department of Posts proposed to bring down this weight limit to 300 grams under exclusive privilege.

(b) No survey has been conducted by the Department of Posts to ascertain whether the category of articles weighing less than 300 grams accounts for 95 per cent of all mailed correspondence in the country.

(c) The Commission has expressed its concern that due to economies of scale and economies of density in postal services as also its omnipresence through out the country, the dominant position of Department of Posts may be used to undermine competition in related services through its monopoly position in the major segment.

The Draft Amendment Bill which proposes to amend the Indian Post Office Act, 1898 envisages the setting up of an independent Mail Regulatory and Development Authority for ensuring a level playing field in the. mail sector for all service providers. The proposed amendment also provides for setting up of an independent Appellate Tribunal for redressal of grievances of service providers.

Call drops and bad connectivity due to interconnection

1041. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that TRAI has rapped BSNL for high level of congestion of calls from networks of private mobile operators to its point of interconnection resulting in call drops and bad connectivity;

(b) if so, whether any stddy has been made to find out exact position, as otherwise any low grade of service to mobile telephone users will discourage use of this service especially in rural areas,

(c) whether there has been any delay on the part of BSNL in provisioning of one leased line on which 30 simultaneous calls can be made; and

(d) the steps have been take to streamline the systems so that, such a situation is not allowed to linger on thus putting adverse effect on the service to mobile users?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) TRAI has sent a list of some points of interconnection of BSNL at which there is congestion as reported by the private operators.

(b) BSNL has reportedly conducted a study of data provided by TRAI to find out the exact position and has examined its network.

(c) BNSL provides the exchange ports with 30 lines capability for establishing Pol. The responsibility of providing the line on which 30 simultaneous calls can be made, rests with the private operators. BSNL has been providing the Pol as per terms and conditions of the interconnect agreement with the private operators. In some cases there have been delay on part of the private operators in commissioning of the interconnection link due to various reasons like non-availability of equipment in their exchanges, non-availability of transmission equipment to connect their exchange to BSNL exchange, non-payment of outstanding dues etc.

(d) Interconnection provisioning is a continuous process. The Government has asked Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited and the private telecom operators to take various steps which *inter-alia* include holding of regular review meetings, streamlining of the procedure for provisioning of Pols in time bound manner, to provide forecast for demand of Pols in advance to enable BSNL to plan necessary equipment where feasible so as to reduce the cases of technical non-feasible.

Women employees in IT sector

†1042. MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of women employees in the IT sector at present;

(b) whether the number of these women employees have increased during the last five years; and

(c) if so, the details thereof, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) The total number of IT and ITES (IT Enabled Services) - BPO (Business

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.